



U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Further Information Contact

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced today the sentencing of Michael Tweedy, age 32, of Petersburg, Virginia, for his role in the severe beating of Lamont Koonce on October 13, 2003, while he was serving as a Petersburg Police officer. United States District Judge James R. Spencer sentenced Tweedy to 108 months imprisonment after Tweedy pleaded guilty to one count of Deprivation of Rights Under Color of Law.

Shortly after midnight on October 13, 2003, Petersburg Police Department Officers Michael Tweedy and David House initiated a traffic stop of a car driven by Koonce, who then fled on foot. A chase ensued through the neighborhood. Tweedy ultimately tackled Koonce to the ground and sprayed him with pepper spray. House soon caught up and assisted Tweedy in restraining Koonce, whose arms were pinned under his body. While House was trying to handcuff Koonce, Tweedy - who had evidently contaminated himself with pepper spray—flew into a rage and stomped Koonce's head, delivering approximately three forceful blows to Koonce's skull. Tweedy returned to Koonce's motionless body three more times, each time delivering about three brutal kicks or stomps to the victim's skull. In all, Tweedy delivered at least four rounds of stomping, kicking and beating to Koonce, totaling approximately a dozen brutal blows to the victim.

Koonce suffered life-threatening injuries as a result of Tweedy's attack, including multiple skull fractures and brain contusions, which put Koonce in a coma for approximately two months. As a result of his head injuries, Koonce suffered two cardiac arrests while he was hospitalized, which caused further serious health complications for Koonce.

One other former Petersburg Police officer, Michael Perkins, was also charged in the beating of Mr. Koonce. He arrived on the scene after Tweedy's assault had began. Without assessing the situation, Perkins raced up and delivered a hard running kick to Koonce's motionless, prostrate body. Perkins was convicted on February 17, 2005, following a three-day jury trial. He will be sentenced by Judge Spencer on May 20, 2005.

Mr. McNulty stated: "Those who are sworn to protect and defend the public have a special burden to ensure that they treat everyone fairly and within the bounds of the law. When an officer breaks that trust, we will aggressively prosecute him."

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The case was initially investigated by the Petersburg Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and the Virginia State Police. In December 2003, those agencies asked federal authorities to

become involved. The Federal Bureau of Investigation then took over the investigation, in conjunction with the United States Attorney's Office.

Also announcing the sentencing are Donald Thompson, Special Agent-In-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Field Office; Lee Crowell, Acting Chief, Petersburg Police Department; and Cassandra Burns, Commonwealth's Attorney, Petersburg.

The case was prosecuted by Brian Hood, Assistant United States Attorney, and Amy Pope, Trial Attorney, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice.

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